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The good Ariel [a restaurant – JG] has not only a Jewish, but a Kraków feel to it: cozy home like, with old wooden furniture, lace doily-topped tables [...] The Nissenbaum Restaurant, however, does not try to be Kraków at all.¹

The above quote is a statement made by Henryk Halkowski, one of the most important activists behind the revitalization of Jewish heritage in Kazimierz, Kraków commenting on restaurants opened in 1993 and 1994 respectively, in an interview given in the 1997. In it he seemingly confirmed the thesis outlined by researchers such as Erica Lehrer, Monica Ruethers, Monika Murzyn-Kupisz. They determined that after the fall of Communism in 1989 and due to efforts of local entrepreneurs Kazimierz, the pre-War Jewish district now devoid of Jewish life, was revitalized. On the one hand it was commodified and littered with Jewish-themed cafés, often dubbed the ‘Jewish Disneyland’. On the other, it emerged to be one of the most important ‘Jewish spaces’ in Poland and on the Continent; it became a space of potential confrontation, dialogue, reconciliation, and cooperation between gentiles and Jews, a place where national identities were re-forged.²

Taking a closer look at Halkowski’s comment this article problematizes Lehrer’s, Ruethers’, and Murzyn-Kupisz’s arguments and challenges their chronology as it draws attention to the heavily mythicized image of Kraków that was created before 1989. Halkowski highlights the importance of this image for memory work; that is the continuous process of the reworking of collective memory; of sets of representations of the past.³ His statement resonates with the scholarly understanding of the collective memory in which narratives about the past are grouped not according to historical connections or chronology but according to values they denote.⁴ Halkowski indicates that for the Jewish past to be recognized, validated, and disseminated via the heritage sites of Kazimierz, it had to be first defined as ‘Kraków’ enough. It had to be merged with the age-old image of the city in a process that itself did not happen overnight. His comment suggests that investigating the history of the image of Kraków is of vital importance for a better understanding of the process of coming to terms with the Jewish past in this Eastern European municipality.

Following Halkowski's suggestion this article informs the debates on Polish memory and wider research on the nature of urban remembrance at the same time.⁵ First, challenging established interpretations of memory work in Poland, it determines that the post-Communists developments in Kazimierz were only possible because local, mid-ranking officials working against the state-sponsored narrative redefined the old Jewish town as early as the 1980s. To support this statement the present article first focuses on the curators from the local history museum and demonstrates how they created an image of, what I call borrowing Magdalena Waligórska's phrase, 'shtetl-romance'.⁶ From the onset this image had been braided with the mythicized image of Kraków.

Second, this article asserts the importance of the heritage preservationists for memory work and identifies them as the activists who translated the image of the 'shtetl-romance' for the use of local entrepreneurs. It suggests new ways of reading preservation plans and policy documents. Rather than seeing them as practical and applicable plans, it treats the plans as sources of impactful images that affect the way other activists, entrepreneurs and journalists in particular, think about the city, its past and its relics. In so doing it feeds into the burgeoning research on urban memory work. The theory was first outlined by John Czaplicka, who commenting on cities as different as Washington, Prague, Vienna, Königsberg, and St. Petersburg noted that 'in contradiction to history dictated from above by the promulgators of political ideologies and the rulers of centralized governments, post-authoritarian urban narratives are [...] composed in closer alignment with the specificity of place'.⁷ This research follows Czaplicka in that it recognizes the importance of the rediscovery of the specific, local, often multi-ethnic past for the urban centres in the Eastern Europe. It also highlights the opposition between local process and the tendencies of central authorities to lean towards ethno-nationalist interpretations. It does not, however, adhere to Czaplicka's focus on the 'post-authoritarian' period as it identifies groups of activists who challenged the dominant, central interpretation of the past well before 1989.

This article is based on a fresh reading of archival policy documents, exhibition scenarios, and official correspondence. It starts with sketching the context of the memory work in Kraków. It then proceeds to discern the meaning of the exhibition on the Jewish past unveiled in 1980, it follows on to analyse the work of heritage preservationists, and concludes by demonstrating the impact of both groups of activists on the post-Communist commodification of Kazimierz.

Past and Present - The Image of Kraków

Kraków is an exceptional city, and one which is crucially important for Polish memory and identity. Sociologist Paweł Kubicki recently confirmed this uniqueness of Kraków calling it a 'city-symbol' that 'has an exceptional position in Polish national culture that places it in the centre of the national discourse'.⁸ Anna Niedźwieź supports Kubicki's notions adding that Kraków entertains a 'symbolic and metaphorical capital-city status' and that this status 'is present in popular discourse [in] names like the „historic capital of Poland“ and „cultural capital“ [...]. The contemporary official name of the city, „Royal Capital City of Kraków“, also recalls its glorious past'.⁹ Moreover, in Niedźwieź's view, confirmed by Patrice Dabrowski, Kraków became 'heart of Poland' and the 'national temple' of the Polish memory and identity.¹⁰ This essay takes the position of Kubicki, Niedźwieź and Dabrowski as a point of departure and goes on to demonstrate how the image of Kraków, as the symbolic capital of Polishness, was infused with references to the Jewish past.

In the background of this mythicized image lies the history of the city. Until the Second World War Kraków had a big, diverse, and age-old Jewish minority connected in particular to Kazimierz, where the pre-modern Jewish town was located.¹¹ The War and the Holocaust spelled an end for the minority. The few Jews that survived and tried to rebuild life in Kraków decided to stay out of public view. They had good reasons for it. The Kraków pogrom of 1947 was but one in series of post-War persecutions later followed by state-sponsored anti-Semitic actions in 1956 and 1968. Anti-Semitism, for centuries present in some sections of Polish society became the norm as the country was moved West and lost all of its pre-War national minorities. Consequently, in the first post-War decades the Polish national identity was redefined and limited to ethnic Poles. The process was initiated in the nineteenth century but was only finalized after 1945 with support of the Communist government. In spite of the Communists however, the national identity was connected with Catholicism and the idiom of 'Pole-Catholic' became widespread.¹² In this ethno-nationalist vision references to the Jewish past were pushed to the margins. If the Jews were remembered it was only in the context of Polish help extended throughout the ages and particularly during the Holocaust.¹³ Moreover, Jews were relegated to the role of the

Threatening Other. They became a soundboard against which proponents of the ethno-nationalist narrative defined Polishness. Shorthand for several anti-Semitic stereotypes, the Jew as Threatening Other became a convenient symbolic scapegoat. He could be blamed for all the nation's tragedies and mishaps from century old defeats to recent failures.¹⁴

In the 1970s and early 1980s some sections of the oppositional elite, mostly left-wing but anti-Communist, and often but not always associated with the liberal wing in the Church, started to challenge the ethno-nationalist image of Polishness. In particular, as both Iwona Irwin-Zarecka and Michael Meng demonstrate, in the wake of the 1968 anti-Semitic campaign carried out by the government during which the last remnants of the Jewish minority were forced to emigrate, the Jewish past was rediscovered.¹⁵ Intellectuals across the country realized that mono-ethnic Poland is a relatively new invention. In consequence, as Krystyna Kerseten and Jerzy Szapiro attested one of 'the ideals of [the oppositional elite became] the need for authentic – and not-illusory and alibi-creating – absolution for the sin of indifference towards anti-Jewish actions and for their silent concealment especially when they were undertaken by Poles'.¹⁶ In effect the multinational past was validated, and tolerance and inclusivity were elevated as important aspects of the critical narrative about the Polish past. Irwin-Zarecka and researchers such as Annamaria Orla-Bukowska and Bartosz Korzeniewski all agree that the oppositional elites first confronted the dark Polish past under Communism but that the changes in popular remembrance started only after 1989.¹⁷ Furthermore, they also assume a clear cut division running through the Polish society. On the one side they place the Communist Party, government, and administration and on the other the oppositional elite and rest of the society.¹⁸ This essay challenges those assumptions as it points towards the importance of mid-ranking officials, that is members of administration, for the development of an oppositional narrative. It also attests that efforts, particularly those of museum curators, bridged the gap between the elite discourse and the mass remembrance already in the early 1980s when the image of the 'shtetl-romance' was created.

'Shtetl-Romance' in the History Museum

First to develop the image of the 'shtetl-romance' were the curators from the branch of the Historical Museum of the City of Kraków (Muzeum Historyczne Miasta Krakowa, MHK) localized in the Old Synagogue, one of the oldest and most imposing buildings in the old Jewish Quarter in Kazimierz. The Jewish branch of the MHK was first opened in 1959 but, as

Jacek Salwiński notes, it only ‘centred on the Jewish traditions and rituals’.¹⁹ The exhibition was thoroughly refurbished in 1980 and presented not only the information about Judaism but also history of the local Jewish community. However, as it was run by Poles for Poles, the exhibition represented an attempt at domesticating the heritage of the Other. Fortifying one stereotype, the curators nonetheless successfully dismantled another: presenting the Jew as the Other they stripped the image of its hostile aspects. Moreover they reimagined Kazimierz as a quaint and magical shtetl in which the coexistence of Poles and Jews was possible.

At the time of its opening, the 1980 exhibition in the Old Synagogue was one of only two standalone presentations of *judaica* in Poland.²⁰ This made it unique, but it also complicated the task for its curators. Jewishness in the 1980s was all but absent from Polish collective memory, and the curators could refer only to a few, rarely positive stereotypes.²¹ According to the initial plan, the new permanent exhibition was intended to cover four main topics: the synagogue, holidays and rituals, the history of Jews in Kraków (including the Holocaust), and daily life in Kazimierz.²² Due to limited space and the small number of artefacts in the Museum’s collection, it was ultimately far more selective. In fact, the main body of the exhibition followed the so-called ‘Jewish plan’. First introduced in 1887 during the Anglo-Jewish Exhibition in London, this plan provided the layout for an exhibition in which artefacts were grouped into three sections. Starting with the synagogue, it proceeded to domestic life, and ended with life-cycle events.²³ This idea had been transplanted to Kraków, with the main adjustment taking the form of a section on the history of the Kraków community.

The archival documents of the Museum provided detailed descriptions of the exhibition. The ground floor of the building was chosen to exhibit artefacts related to religion, rituals, traditions, and celebrations. The Main Hall – the sanctuary – still hosted the *Aron Ha-Kodesh*, the Ark, which in active synagogues is used for storing Torah scrolls. Next to it was the *bimah*, the platform from which the Torah was read. In the case of the Old Synagogue the *bimah* was shaped like a tent or arbour. Around these objects, in glass cases, cult-related artefacts were displayed, with a number of prayer books and Talmuds placed next to menorahs and smaller candlesticks. Basic furniture was reconstructed to show how the Main Hall had once been arranged. The adjacent room, the so-called Singers Hall, hosted a far bigger collection. Whereas the sanctuary was designed to resemble its former appearance, the Singers Hall hosted a simple exposition of artefacts. Glass cases positioned around the

room displayed a variety of *tefillins*, *tallits*, *parokhets*, Torah crowns, and *yadim*, in addition to three paintings showing Jews at prayer by renowned Jewish painters from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.²⁴ The third room, the Women's Hall, hosted a collection of objects, graphics, and paintings related to rituals and life-cycle events. The cases held tableware, cutlery, Hanukkah lamps, and candlesticks, together with *mezuzot* and scrolls of the Book of Esther in cylinders.²⁵

The original concept behind the 'Jewish plan' was to highlight interconnections between Jewish and secular European art, and thus between the two traditions. The creators of the 1887 exhibition, as Jews themselves, had wanted to show that even though Jewish life had its own particular rhythm, it was nevertheless part of Western civilization.²⁶ The intention of the Kraków curators was similar. In the scenario they insisted on presenting Kraków's Jews as members of the in-group, of 'our' society.²⁷ The outcome, however, was the very opposite of what was intended: it reasserted the Jew as the Other, an unforeseen consequence of using the 'Jewish plan'. The London exhibition had been created by Jews at a time when England had a large and visible Jewish minority. It presented artefacts that were used at the time of the exhibition by a segment of contemporary society. The exhibition in Kraków, on the other hand, prepared by gentiles for gentiles, displayed instead the remnants of a bygone world: historical objects from the nineteenth century and earlier. Richly ornate *yadim* and *mezuzot* were all that was left of a historical group; for the majority of visitors there was no obvious link between these ritual objects of Judaism and any sector of Polish society from the 1980s. If the London exhibition insisted on incorporating Jewish art into Western, mainstream culture, then the one in Kraków highlighted the differences between the two. The presentation of religious artefacts, combined with the art exhibition organized in the upper floor of the Synagogue, depicted the Polish Jew as the Other of Polish society; as someone who looked different, acted differently, and even used different tableware: that belonged, in effect, to a different time.

Joanna Michlic and Sundar Saddukai assert that Otherness is created, rather than innate.²⁸ In particular, Saddukai notes that the concept of the Other is 'based on the notion of perceived difference and is a cognitive process involving observation, collection of data and theorising'.²⁹ It emerges through a process of depiction: in this case, presentation in the museum. The out-group is presented as contrasting with the in-group, and the difference between the two groups is what defines them. Otherness becomes a contrasting background

against which members of the in-group can define and valorise themselves. Sarrukai examines the most common types of the Other, noting that it can be, but is not necessarily depicted as threatening, as an enemy.³⁰ Similarly, Michlic, whose work focuses on images of the Threatening Other, nevertheless admits that it is only in situations of crisis that the 'Threatening' part is created.³¹

Although they were working with a negatively coded stereotype, the curators at the MHK managed to overcome this aspect and did not present Jews as threatening. In her book on the recent revival of klezmer music Magdalena Waligórska points out that the large part of contemporary representation of Jews in Polish popular culture did not focus on that aspect either. She explains that originally, in peasant culture, the image of the shtetl Jew in a *yarmulke*, a long black kaftan, and with side-locks, was shorthand for several anti-Semitic stereotypes, connoting everything from uncanny business skills to a proclivity toward ritual murder.³² However, she claims in the post-war years, when there were virtually no Jews left in Poland and thus Polish folk and popular cultures were cut off from the sources of that angst, that these images evolved, 'undergoing a re-evaluation, in which they [were] transposed into more "sympathetic" ones'.³³ Her interpretation does seem overly optimistic; anti-Semitic stereotypes were present in Poland well into the twenty-first century.³⁴ Nonetheless, it is certain that these images were gradually declining, to be replaced by the newer, tamer pictures to which Waligórska refers. This process took place in the Old Synagogue. Using established tropes from folklore, literature, and art, curators recast the Jew as the 'Sympathetic' Other of the Polish nation. They also brought to the fore the image of a quaint, old-worldly, and peaceful shtetl. In their vision, the shtetl served as a space of (potential) cohabitation rather than conflict. Waligórska, elaborating on the image of Jews in musical culture, has termed this kind of depiction 'shtetl-romance'.³⁵

The vision of the 'shtetl-romance' was presented most fully in the so-called 'Iconography Hall', one of the two additional expositions complementing the main exhibition. Whereas the first three rooms focused on religion and rituals, the two remaining ones were intended to present the history of Kraków's Jews. This intention soon proved to be impossible to fulfil, due mostly to a lack of artefacts. In the final version, one of the rooms focused on the Holocaust, seen as the final chapter in the history of the local Jewish community, and the other was turned into a gallery of paintings. This essay focuses on memory work on the Jewish, pre-Holocaust past, therefore an analysis of the Holocaust

presentation lies outside of its remit. It suffices to say that the war-time section of the exhibition reflected trends discernible in the rest of the presentation.³⁶

In the 'Iconography Hall' the curators aimed at presenting the history, or at least the daily life, of the community through a series of paintings.³⁷ They gave a face to the Other whose artefacts had been presented in the first three rooms. A series of works from the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, by artists regarded by many as Poland's finest, the paintings focused either on Kazimierz or on its inhabitants. In the decades running up to the Second World War, Kazimierz was home to the poorer stratum of the Orthodox population, which was hardly representative of the whole of the city's Jewish minority.³⁸ The selected paintings followed the established pattern of depicting Jews. From Juliusz Kossak's 'Jewish Merchant Breaking in a Horse' to Ignacy Kriger's photographs of 'Jewish Types', they all presented Orthodox Jews with strong, stereotypical features, usually clad in black, often in a poor, shtetl-like setting.³⁹ An official guidebook to the exhibition, describing the works of one artist, highlights that:

It was that [Orthodox – JG] world that has been painted on numerous occasions by Waław Koniuszko (1854-99), who was fascinated by the romantic colour of the Jewish district, for which he found the best depiction in the moody, nocturnal oil painting of old architecture of ragged [postrzępionych] houses with windows illuminated by a yellowish glow of candles.⁴⁰

The curators thus created an image of a quaint and magical shtetl. Even if the majority of the visitors were not capable of identifying the references to works by Isaac Bashevis Singer or to *Fiddler on the Roof*, the image was nonetheless clear. The paintings and descriptions evoked an unambiguous picture: a space where among 'ragged' houses and by candlelight, one might run into an Orthodox merchant. Significantly, this image did not focus on hostility; on the contrary, it still depicted both groups separately, but by constructing and displaying alluring, quaint spaces, the image of 'shtetl-romance' suggested the possibility of peaceful coexistence. Moreover, there was nothing sinister in this presentation of the Other. Neither the 'Iconography Hall' nor the exhibition on the Holocaust mentioned any conflict between Poles and Jews. In this way, the exhibition in the Old Synagogue both re-established the Jew as the Other and at the same time brought to life a mystical reality of the shtetl in which the coexistence of both nations was possible.

The narrative in the museum provided a popular version of the discourse of the oppositional elites of the period. It stood in stark opposition to the ethno-nationalist interpretation officially supported by the party-state.⁴¹ Even if limited, it nevertheless served to remind the wider public about Kraków's Jewish past; thus it made a first step toward recasting Kraków's history as multicultural. In so doing, it followed a path first forged by the Polish intelligentsia supporting the critical engagement with the past, and combined tropes from elite discourse with popular representations. As noted above, initial debates about Jewish history and Polish-Jewish relations had begun as early as the mid-1970s. The curators from the MHK borrowed their sympathetic outlook from those debates. They wanted to engage their audience with the Jewish past, not threaten them with the Jewish menace. To achieve this end they used tropes and representations well established in Polish popular culture, but stripped them of any hostile aspect. Their example was later followed by heritage preservationists, city planners, and eventually entrepreneurs, who translated the vision of the 'shtetl-romance' into the space of the city, turning Szeroka Street into a Jewish-themed heritage park and popular tourist destination.

Planning Preservation – Reimagining the Past

Among the most important activists that contributed to the excavation of the Jewish past in a form accessible for the general public were local heritage preservationists. Surprisingly, authors writing about memory work tend to overlook preservationists; some focus on political actors,⁴² others on fictive kinship, on groups that collectively endured an event and have the need to speak about it,⁴³ still others analyse conflicts between those actors;⁴⁴ most, however, ignore preservationists. Even Michael Meng, whose work focuses on heritage creation, only partially acknowledges the input of preservationists while still prioritising political actors.⁴⁵ It seems that most of these authors treat preservationists as technical experts responsible for implementing governmental policies. As a result, they see preservation plans as translations of political will to the cityscape, and judge them by their impact on the look and feel of historical districts. To overcome this position, I recall Frank Mort's research on city planners. Commenting on the position of planners and the importance of plans, Mort proposes turning away from assessment based on 'the effectiveness of

implementation'.⁴⁶ Instead he suggests examining the 'effects on social and political movements for urban change', or 'shifts in professional and popular opinion'.⁴⁷ Practical decisions regarding changes in the cityscape are not based on scientific rationales laid down in plans and studies, but rather are the product of a 'repertoire of intellectual meaning systems about city life'.⁴⁸ Mort suggests that plans should not be read simply as technical documents, but instead as persuasive images: visions of the city that are disseminated among city officials and a broader public and backed by the authority of their creators. In this view, the success of the plan is not measured by its direct implementation, but rather by the impact its vision had on the decision makers.

Paradoxically, the fact that general society sees planners (or in this case preservationists) only as objective scientists is what lends them their power. Their authority is grounded in a common belief that they are impartial, and that the drawing of plans is a scientific, objective process. The heritage, however, is constructed rather than organic; thus, the process of heritage preservation is a process of creation, and has little to do with any objective science.⁴⁹ Ruins are chosen, imbued with new meanings, and inserted into heritage. Every stage of this process is subjective; plans created by heritage preservationists are neither objective nor scientific; rather, they are narratives, offering images of the past created in relation to the ruins of that same past. They are interpretations, prioritising aspects important for their authors and omitting fragments that the authors find unimportant or problematic. They add to the 'meaning system about city life'.⁵⁰ Yet at the same time they are perceived as objective documents.

This opinion was espoused by preservationists themselves. The Regional Heritage Protection Office (Wojewódzki Urząd Ochrony Zabytków, WUOZ), one of the prime outlets for preservationists in Kraków, laid out plans, insisted on their implementation, and criticized the city government for failing to do so.⁵¹ In reality, however, it had limited, mostly reactive powers, both before and after the fall of Communism.⁵² Simply put its decisions were often ignored. The office was therefore unable to initiate any major intervention into the cityscape. Even though the WUOZ employees recognized the limitations placed on them, they never reimagined the Office as, for example, a think-tank.⁵³ They always insisted on the practical implementation of their ideas. These demands, however, were impossible to realize, not only due to the limited powers of the WUOZ; as this section demonstrates, the plans drawn by

preservationists were also often impossible to implement in themselves, lacking coherence or suggesting impractical or impossible changes.

Communist authorities also saw preservationists as impartial technical experts. Ironically, their legal standing, combined with the prevalent idea of their subjugated role, contributed to their relative independence. Andrzej Gaczoł, author of the history of the revitalization of Kraków, notes that even during Stalinism, the darkest and most oppressive period of Polish post-war history, preservationists were allowed a certain level of independence and free speech. They could formulate their doctrines freely, and were even allowed to criticize members of the government who prioritized rapid industrialization at the expense of the preservation of historical town centres.⁵⁴ Due to the relative freedom granted to them, Kraków's preservationists developed into a large, diverse, and independent community. By the early 1980s most worked for the WUOZ and a number of them held positions in academia, mostly in architecture and art history departments. Another important outlet of their activities was the Citizens' Committee for the Renovation of Kraków Monuments (Społeczny Komitet Ochrony Zabytków Krakowa, SKOZK), the body that lobbied for and funded most of the revitalization projects in Kraków and in Kazimierz.⁵⁵ It was in that very network of connections and relations that their power lay. Their visions were disseminated through the WUOZ plans, in university teaching, and through the SKOZK publications.⁵⁶ Architects, officials, and journalists active in the 1990s and 2000s were connected to and often educated by this network of experts.

Moreover, WUOZ and SKOZK, one part of the state's administration and the other formed by the representative of administration and state-owned companies, entertained a dose of independence from the central government. In the late 1970s and early 1980s, in order to improve its international image, the government decided to create 'appearances of a Jewish authenticity'.⁵⁷ In practice it meant that the Jewish sites were no longer demolished. Furthermore, one in Warsaw synagogue was renovated.⁵⁸ Kraków preservationists from WUOZ and SKOZK creatively reworked the instructions coming from Warsaw. Contrary to the government intentions they actually conceived and started to implement a program that was supposed to revitalize Kazimierz and its Jewish relics.

The person, who was instrumental in shaping the preservationists' approach, was Bogusław Krasnowolski, art historian and author of a number of key documents defining

Kazimierz. One of his most important texts, in which he sketched out his vision of the district, was the rather oddly entitled ‘Kraków. Kazimierz with Stradom and Former St Sebastian Meadow. Historic and Urbanistic Study. Preservation and Urbanistic Study’ (here: ‘Study’) and was produced in the early 1980s, at a time when heritage protection and planning services were drawing up new plans of Kazimierz.⁵⁹ Along with Krasnowolski’s ‘Study’, numerous other documents were prepared, the most important of which was a master plan for Kazimierz grounded in the ‘Study’.⁶⁰ Indeed, the author of the master plan had copied large sections of Krasnowolski’s text, particularly those pertaining to the treatment of Jewish relics. Krasnowolski’s influence can additionally be traced even further forward in time. His ideas are evident in various WUOZ documents: letters, plans, decisions, and memos, all linking back to his vision. He was furthermore responsible for drafting SKOZK plans,⁶¹ and the few not authored by him replicated his stance nonetheless.⁶² When SKOZK mastered the rules of modern PR in the 1990s and 2000s, Krasnowolski’s plans were published and disseminated among a broader, non-professional public.⁶³ Furthermore, he was a lecturer, public speaker, and a prolific author, which additionally contributed to the dissemination of his ideas.⁶⁴

In this section, I examine Krasnowolski’s ‘Study’ and analyse his vision of Kazimierz. Close reading of the document reveals his intention of transplanting ideas developed in the MHK into the cityscape. He advocated remaking Kazimierz and turning it into a version of its nineteenth-century self. He sought to blend out the painful twentieth century, and to offer in its place the vision of an early modern, quaint, and peaceful city that belonged to both Poles and Jews. Krasnowolski declared that his aim was to revitalize the district, to bring it back to life. He believed that if the buildings were restored and the poor inhabitants relocated, Kazimierz could become an attractive place in which to live, and an important part of the city centre.⁶⁵ It is clear that he aimed to keep the urban functions of the central district intact. At the same time, however, he envisaged Kazimierz as an open-air museum, suggesting changes that would contribute to transforming it into a heritage park. Importantly, the ‘Study’ covered the whole of Kazimierz. This section focuses on his approach to Jewish relics; however, he applied the same general ideas – exposition of monumental buildings, turning the area into a heritage theme park – to the Christian part of the district as well.⁶⁶

Krasnowolski's 'Study' began with a reminder that Kazimierz was exceptional, due to the 'historical climate of its streets'.⁶⁷ To preserve this climate he suggested protecting the street plan and skylines,⁶⁸ and insisted on reintroducing cobblestones, and lampposts with a design consistent with nineteenth-century gas lamps.⁶⁹ He advocated for the rebuilding of selected tenements pulled down after the War in such a way that they would resemble their originals.⁷⁰ At the same time, however, he made exceptions for certain areas. Demolished houses on Józefa Street, the street adjacent to the Old Synagogue, would not be rebuilt, so as to improve the visibility of the temple. He even went one step further in this regard, calling for the demolition of selected buildings around the Remuh Synagogue, one of the most important relics, with the same goal in mind.⁷¹ His reverence of iconic historical relics, combined with suggestions such as pulling down buildings that he did not deem interesting or worthy, tied in to the vision of a heritage park. Turning historic districts into open-air museums, quarters in which people could not live due to their museum and leisure functions, was recognized as a problem as early as the 1960s.⁷² Nevertheless, the temptation to focus on tourist attractions proved to be too strong.

Jewish relics played a key role in this vision of the district. Krasnowolski elaborated on his understanding of the multicultural past of the quarter by stating that 'it has to be specially highlighted that Jewish part of Kazimierz – [sic] is unique in the global scale document of Jewish culture, of which we know so little in our country today'.⁷³ Following this line, he proposed preserving all of Kazimierz's Jewish sites. His approach was holistic: he understood that relics taken over by random users were those most likely to fall into disrepair, and thus suggested first renovating the buildings, and then choosing proper users for them.⁷⁴ He envisaged two options for the Synagogues. Some were to retain religious functions; all others were to be turned into multi-site Jewish museums similar to the one in Prague.⁷⁵

In his study Krasnowolski translated the idea of the 'shtetl-romance' from museum narrative to the cityscape. It can be seen in his insistence on reinstalling cobblestones and lampposts resembling nineteenth-century gas lamps. The first was impractical, the second costly; both, however, had the power to return the cityscape to its imagined, early modern self. Curators from the MHK had referenced 'romantic colour', 'ragged' architecture, and the 'glow of candles' in their presentation of Kazimierz.⁷⁶ Krasnowolski could not bring back the candles, but he could at least insist on imitation gas lamps, and 'ragged' cobblestones in place

of smooth asphalt. Moreover, one of the key features of his plan was a focus on iconic sites. He suggested renovating Synagogues and improving their visibility. Jewish heritage was something to be highlighted, a notion that ties back once again to the vision of the 'shtetl-romance', Just as Orthodox Jews wearing black kaftans and side-locks filled the space of the imagined shtetl, the Synagogues – the architectural Others – filled Kazimierz. They were stylistically different from the surrounding buildings, and thus attested to the differences between Polish and Jewish cultures. At the same time, however, Krasnowolski tried to blend them seamlessly into the surrounding area, emphasising that they belonged to the district. The treatment of the Jewish relics attested to the fact that Krasnowolski regarded Jewishness as Other, but not as a Threatening Other. His ideas to renovate and expose the Synagogues, in tandem with his affirmative statements on the role of Jewish culture, suggested that there was no hostility in this vision; on the contrary, just like in the vision of the 'shtetl-romance', the marking of difference and promise of cohabitation were both present.

The reconstruction of a long-lost Golden Age ties into Svetlana Boym's concept of nostalgia, particularly of a restorative kind. Boym sees nostalgia – the yearning not only for places, but also for times – as one of the most important forces shaping cities across Europe in the late twentieth century. One of the variants of the affect she identifies is a restorative nostalgia which 'attempts a transhistorical reconstruction of the lost home'.⁷⁷ This appears to be the key to understanding Krasnowolski's 'Study'. In proposing the recreation of the pseudo-nineteenth-century 'Golden Age' in the cityscape, he suggested (re)creating home – a place of safety. In Krasnowolski's vision this 'home' entailed a space where Poles and Jews could live together. The 'Study' treated Kazimierz as a whole, proposing the renovation of not only its Jewish but also its Christian parts, so that the heritage of both groups would coexist in one district. Boym also reminds us that activists creating a nostalgic vision of the past believe that they only excavate the truth. They see themselves as bringing back the objective and authentic values of certain sites, lost to the process of modernization.⁷⁸ All these aspects can be found in Krasnowolski's works; they were what made his vision so compelling. However unrealistic the image he created in the 'Study' and later propagated in the SKOZK programs, it had the potential to satiate nostalgia. Moreover, the 'Study' was presented as an objective development, rather than the dream of an intellectual disillusioned with the twentieth century. His scientific language and references to scientific method gave his ideas the semblance of objectivity and truth, and masked the fact that he offered an

interpretation of the past and a vision for the future. This was the basis of the paradoxical success of his vision.

The initial changes in the city-scape were scarce. The 1980 exhibition in the Old Synagogue was one of the most important, practical interventions into local memory. It was later followed by minor works in the Remuh Synagogue and Cemetery and in the Temple Synagogue.⁷⁹ However, the persistent crisis that riddled the Polish economy in the 1980s coupled with the opposition of top-ranking local officials blocked more ambitious initiatives.⁸⁰ In fact, in the years that followed the completion of the ‘Study’, both Krasnowolski himself⁸¹ and other authors, such as Gaczol,⁸² complained that the plan had never been acted upon. The importance of the ‘Study’, and the source of its future success, thus lay not in its implementation, but rather in the way that it offered an impactful vision of a district. Ideas such as pulling down selected tenements or turning all remaining Synagogues into museums never came to fruition. Yet the overarching narrative became widespread. After the collapse of Communism, a version of ‘shtetl-romance’ – of a lost home from the Golden Age – was realized. Local entrepreneurs, often using SKOZK funds and expertise of preservationists trained by Krasnowolski, revitalized Kazimierz. In the years following 1989, an uncountable number of, often ephemeral, cafés, restaurants, galleries, bookshops, and souvenir stalls referencing ‘things Jewish’ opened. Ariel, Alef, Austeria, Noah’s Ark, Klezmer Hois mushroomed on Szeroka Street.⁸³ Six out of seven Synagogues were renovated.⁸⁴ A new educational centre, new museum, and new community centre were established.⁸⁵ The Festival of Jewish Culture, “a nine-day extravaganza” of Jewish music and culture gained world recognition.⁸⁶

Eve Jochnowtiz dismisses those projects noting that ‘Cracow’s politicians and entrepreneurs have produced Szeroka Street as a Jewish theme park in a country where no Jews survive’,⁸⁷ Monika Murzyn-Kupisz notes Kazimierz was rejected as a ‘Jewish Disneyland’.⁸⁸ As a matter of fact one of the establishments on Szeroka Street boasted six-foot-high – and apparently electric – menorahs⁸⁹ and plaster Lions of Judah while other dressed their waiters in white shirts white tieless shirts and black vests, a clear reference to the garb of Orthodox Jews.⁹⁰ Referring back to Halkowski’s comment it would be only too easy to follow Jochnowitz and dismiss the image of ‘Kraków’ as a kitsch and nostalgic representation of the past. However, this research assumes John Czaplicka’s framework of urbanization of history which reminds us that local, urban memory work was often conducted *in opposition*. In the

case of Kraków, attempts of a symbolic bringing back of the Jews were set against the dominating ethno-nationalist interpretation of the past and in a country whose population had little to no knowledge of Jewish past and culture. It is therefore hardly surprising that the earliest representations were pretentious and tasteless.⁹¹ Local entrepreneurs tried to represent the Jewish past but had very few templates to model their work on. Towards the end of 1990s and in the 2000s understanding of the 'things Jewish' changed and Szeroka Street became somewhat more nuanced and less tacky. In fact, as Erica Lehrer observed during her prolonged period of ethnographic research, representation of Jewishness in Kazimierz 'has grown tamer with time and tourists'.⁹² Moreover, Meng points out that 'rather than arguing that tourism and nostalgia have simply produced kitschy, inauthentic spaces, [it is more productive to-JG] unearth the deeper political and cultural meanings of restoring the Jewish past in the urban environment'.⁹³ In the case of Kazimierz, this deeper meaning lay in an effort to redefine Polish identity along multi-ethnic lines. Local activists insisted on reinterpreting Polish history so that it included references to both a Jewish and ethnic Polish past which in turn made Poles face 'questions both about the dark past and about what kind of national community Poland wants to be at present and in the future'.⁹⁴

Conclusion

This article informs the debates on urban memory work, particularly those pertaining to remembrance in Eastern European cities. It reminds us about the importance of the mythicized images of the past for memory work and analyses the history of creation of one such image, namely the image of the Jewish past as 'shtetl-romance' in Kraków. In so doing it demonstrates the importance of marginalizes categories of activists, especially the heritage preservationists, for memory work. Moreover, it problematizes the importance of the 1989-1991 threshold for the urban memory work and elaborates on the nature of commemorations of the Jewish past in Kraków in the early 1980s.

Expanding on the rich research on urbanization of memory, theory first outlined by John Czaplicka, this article determines that heritage preservationists, often disregarded as technical experts, were instrumental in the process of creation of urban representations of the past. They created and disseminated images of cities pasts which in turn informed the revitalization that shaped those cities future. The allegedly technical character of their work lent an aura of scientific impartiality to their visions and to images they created which

accounts for the success of their work. Therefore incorporating heritage preservation plans in the research on memory allows for a better understanding of the process in which collective representations were shaped.

Moreover, this article offers a new reading of Polish attempts at rediscovery and coming to terms with the Jewish past. First, it challenges the stereotypical division into two separate groups of activists responsible for remembering and forgetting the Jewish minority. Where Szpociński sees ‘clear opposition’ between the Communists, their government, and its administration and the society that together with the Catholic Church persistently opposed the State this research points towards the group that defied this division; towards mid-ranking officials.⁹⁵ They were the representatives of the State who engaged with the de-facto oppositional memory work which attest to the fact that there was no clear cut division between the State and the society and that Communist and oppositional elites enmeshed.

Second, problematising established interpretations according to which public, meaningful attempts at coming to terms with the Jewish past took place only after the fall of Communism, or even as late as in the 2000s,⁹⁶ this research identifies projects initiated in the early 1980s. In particular it focused on the 1980 exhibition organized in the Old Synagogue in Kraków and demonstrate how the image of ‘shtetl-romance’, an image of mythicized, peaceful shared Polish-Jewish town has been created there. The exhibition presented the Jew as the Other, however not as a Threatening one. It was a first step to reincorporation of Jewishness into a definition of Polish nation. Furthermore, commenting on preservationists’ plans and studies this article demonstrates how they translated the idea of the ‘shtetl-romance’ into a practical language of architecture and planning. Even though none of the plans were, nor ever could be, applied in practice they nevertheless provided persuasive images of Kraków’s past and its heritage. In so doing they defined what was ‘Kraków’ enough to be commemorated in the city.

¹ Jack Kugelmass and Annamaria Orla-Bukowska, “‘If You Build It They Will Come’”: Recreating an Historic Jewish District in Post-Communist Krakow’, *City and Society Annual Review*, 10.1 (1998), p. 332.

² Erica Lehrer, *Jewish Poland Revisited: Heritage Tourism in Unquiet Places* (Bloomington, 2013), Erica Lehrer, ‘Can There Be a Conciliatory Heritage?’, *International Journal of Heritage Studies*, 16 (2010), pp. 269–288, Erica Lehrer, ‘Repopulating Jewish Poland-in Wood’, in Michael C. Steinlauf and Anthony Polonsky (eds.), *Polin. Studies in Polish Jewry. Focusing on Jewish Popular Culture in Poland and Its Afterlife*, (Oxford - Portland, 2003), Monica Ruethers, ‘Jewish Spaces and Gypsy Spaces in the Cultural Topographies of a New Europe: Heritage Re-Enactment as Political Folklore’, *European Review of History: Revue Européenne D’histoire*, 20 (2013), pp. 671–695, Monika A. Murzyn, *Kazimierz. The Central European Experience of Urban Regeneration* (Kraków, 2006).

³ On memory work see: Iwona Irwin-Zarecka, *Neutralizing Memory. The Jew in Contemporar Poland* (New Brunswick and London, 1989), p. 104, for the definition of collective memory see Barbara Szacka, *Czas Przeszły, Pamięć, Mit* (Warszawa, 2006), p. 19, and Barbara Misztal, *Theories of Social Remembering* (Philadelphia, 2003).

⁴ Szacka, *Czas Przeszły*, p. 94.

⁵ Barbara Törnquist-Plewa (ed.), *Whose Memory? Which Future?: Remembering Ethnic Cleansing and Lost Cultural Diversity in Easter, Ventral, and Southeastern Europe* (New York, 2016), John Czaplicka et al. (eds), *Cities after the Fall of Communism* (Baltimore and Washington, 2009), John J. Czaplicka and Blair A. Ruble (eds), *Composing Urban History and the Constitution of Civic Identities* (Baltimore and London, 2003), Gregor Thum, *Obce Miasto. Wrocław 1945 i Potem* (Wrocław, 2008), Ewa Ochman, *Post-Communist Poland - Contedted Pasts and Future Identities* (London and New York: Routledge, 2013).

⁶ Magdalena Waligórska, *Klezmer’s Afterlife. An Ethnography of the Jewish Music Revival in Poland and Germany* (Oxford, 2013), p. 148.

⁷ John J. Czaplicka, ‘Conclusion. Urban History after a Return to Local Self-Determination - Local History and Civic Identity’, in John J. Czaplicka and Blair A. Ruble (eds), *Composing Urban History and the Constitution of Civic Identities*, (Baltimore and London, 2003), p. 372.

⁸ Paweł Kubicki, *Miasto w sieci znaczeń: Kraków i jego tożsamości* (Kraków, 2010), p. 7, see also Patrice M. Dabrowski, 'Commemorations and the National Revitalization of Kraków', *Ece-Urban. The Online Publication Series of the Centre for Urban Hisotry of East Central Europe*, (2008).

⁹ Anna Niedźwiedź, 'Mythical Vision of the City : Kraków as the "Pope's City"', *Anthropology of East Europe Review*, 27 (2009), p. 210.

¹⁰ Niedźwiedź, 'Mythical Vision of the City', pp. 201-209 and Dabrowski, *Commemorations*.

¹¹ Michał Galas and Antony Polonsky, 'Introduction', in Michał Galas and Antony Polonsky (eds), *Polin. Studies in Polish Jewry. Jews in Krakow* (Oxford - Portland, 2011), p. 6.

¹² Brian Porter-Szűkes, *Faith and Fatherland. Catholicism, Modernity, and Poland* (Oxford, 2011), p. 9.

¹³ Annamaria Orla-Bukowska, 'New Threads on an Old Loom: National Memory and Social Identity in Postwar and Post-Communist Poland', in R.N. Lebow et al (eds), *The Politics of Memory in Postwar Europe* (Durham and London, 2006), pp. 181 and further.

¹⁴ Joanna Beata Michlic, *Poland's Threatening Other. The Image of the Jew from 1880 to the Present* (Lincoln and London, 2006), p. 19.

¹⁵ Irwin-Zarecka, *Neutralizing Memory*, p. 86-89, Michael Meng, *Shattered Spaces: Encountering Jewish Ruins in Postwar Germany and Poland* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, and London, 2011), p. 155.

¹⁶ Krystyna Kersten and Jerzy Szapiro, 'The Contexts of the So-Called Jewish Question in Poland after World War II', in Władysław T. Bartoszewski (ed.), *Polin. Studies in Polish Jewry. Poles and Jews: Perceptions and Misperceptions*, 4 (Oxford, 1990), p. 265.

¹⁷ Irwin-Zarecka, *Neutralizing Memory*, pp. 35-37, Orla-Bukowska, 'New Threads on an Old Loom', pp. 192-195, Bartosz Korzeniewski, *Transformacja Pamięci. Przewartościowania W Pamięci Przeszłości a Wybrane Aspekty Dyskursu Publicznego O Przeszłości W Polsce Po 1989 Roku* (Poznań, 2010), p. 8.

¹⁸ Andrzej Szpociński, 'Formy Przeszłości a Komunikacja Społeczna', in Andrzej Szpociński and Piotr Tadeusz Kwiatkowski (eds), *Przeszłość Jako Przedmiot Przekazu* (Warszawa, 2006), p. 33, Korzeniewski, *Transformacja Pamięci*, p. 8.

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- ²¹ Alina Cała, *Wizerunek Żyda w Polskiej kulturze ludowej* (Warszawa, 1992), p. 184.
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- ²³ Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, *Destination Culture. Tourism, Museums, and Heritage* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1998), p. 86.
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- ²⁵ Kraków, AMKH, 'Wystawa Stała,' Sig. 157/3.
- ²⁶ Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, *Destination Culture*, p.86.
- ²⁷ Kraków. AMHK, Wystawa Stała,' Sig. 157/3.
- ²⁸ Michlic, *Poland's Threatening Other*, pp. 18-19, Montserrat Guibernau, *The Identity of Nations* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2007), p. 30,
- ²⁹ Sundar Sarukkai, 'The „Other” in Anthropology and Philosophy,' *Economic and Political Weekly*, 32 (1997), p. 1406.
- ³⁰ Sarukkai, 'The “Other”', p. 1406, see also: Cała, *Wizerunek Żyda*, p. 185, Waligórska, *Klezmer's Afterlife*, p. 10.
- ³¹ Michlic, *Poland's Threatening Other*, p. 19.
- ³² Waligórska, *Klezmer's Afterlife*, p. 143-146.
- ³³ Waligórska *Klezmer's Afterlife*, p. 147.
- ³⁴ See for example: Michlic, *Poland's Threatening Other*, pp. 230-260.
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- ³⁶ Kraków, AMKH, 'Wystawa Stała,' Sig. 157/3.
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⁴⁷ Mort, ‘Fantasies of Metropolitan Life’, p. 123.

⁴⁸ Mort, ‘Fantasies of Metropolitan Life’, p. 123.

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⁵⁷ as quoted in Meng, *Shattered Spaces*, p. 175.

⁵⁸ Meng, *Shattered Spaces*, p. 178

⁵⁹ Kraków, Archiwum Wojewódzkiego Urzędu Ochrony Zabytków (AWUOZ), 'Kraków. Kazimierz ze Stradomiem i dawną Łąką św. Sebastiana. Studium historyczno-urbanistyczne. Studium urbanistyczno-konserwatorskie,' Sig. 9897/85.

⁶⁰ Kraków, Archiwum Biura Planowania Przestrzennego (ABPP), 'Kazimierz i Stradom. Miejscowy plan zag. przestrzennego zabytkowego zespołu staromiejskiego Kazimierza i Stradomia, Podstawowe założenia planu', Sig. 210.

⁶¹ Krasnowolski, *Odnova zabytków*.

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⁶³ Krasnowolski, *Odnova zabytków* and Gaczoł, 'Program'.

⁶⁴ for a list on public lectures given by Krasnowolski see: Wiesław Bieńkowski, *Strażnicy dziejów miasta narodowej pamięci. Towarzystwo Miłośników Historii i Zabytków Krakowa w latach 1896-1996* (Kraków, 1997), pp. 331-332, examples of popular journal articles: Bogusław Krasnowolski, 'Układ przestrzenny krakowskiego Kazimierza w wieku XIV', *Rocznik Krakowski*, LIV (1988), Bogusław Krasnowolski, 'Problematyka konserwatorska krakowskiego Kazimierza', *Rocznik Krakowski*, LIV (1988), Bogusław Krasnowolski, 'Ochrona konserwatorska Krakowa w latach 1990-1995 w działalności Społecznego Komitetu Odnowy Zabytków Krakowa', *Rocznik Krakowski*, LXI (1995), for SKOZK plans see: Bogusław Krasnowolski, *Odnova zabytków*), and Gaczoł, 'Program'.

⁶⁵ AWOUZ, 'Kraków. Kazimierz,' Sig. 9897/85, fol. 3 and fols 33-34.

⁶⁶ AWOUZ, 'Kraków. Kazimierz,' Sig. 9897/85, fol. 35-37.

⁶⁷ AWOUZ, 'Kraków, Kazimierz,' Sig. 9897/85, fols 28-29.

⁶⁸ AWOUZ, 'Kraków, Kazimierz,' Sig. 9897/85, fol 4.

⁶⁹ AWOUZ, 'Kraków, Kazimierz,' Sig. 9897/85, fols 28-29.

⁷⁰ AWOUZ, 'Kraków, Kazimierz,' Sig. 9897/85, fol 57.

⁷¹ AWOUZ, 'Kraków, Kazimierz,' Sig. 9897/85, fols 54-56

⁷² Gaczoł, 'Program', p. 163.

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- ⁸¹ Tomasz Szczypiński, 'Polityka Gminy Na Krakowskim Kazimierzu,' in *Zeszyty KIN. Perspektywy rozwoju Kazimierza. Co dalej z rewitalizacją?* (Kraków, 2000), p.34
- ⁸² Gaczol, *Kraków*, p. 163.
- ⁸³ Murzyn, *Kazimierz*, pp. 440-442.
- ⁸⁴ AWUOZ, 'Synagoga Remu. Ogólnie', AWUOZ, 'Synagoga Tempel. Ogólnie', AWUOZ, 'Synagoga Kupa. Ogólnie'. AWUOZ, 'Synagoga Stara. Ogólnie', AWUOZ, 'Synagoga Poppera. Ogólnie', AWUOZ, 'Synagoga Remu. Wysoka, AWUOZ, 'Synagoga Izaaka. Ogólnie'.
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